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Research Paper

Dental Hygiene -Knowledge among Mothers of School Children

Medical Science

KEYWORDS : Mothers, primary school children, dental hygiene

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Good dental hygiene and regular attention to dental caries are vital parts of health supervision during school age period. Children of this age tend to become careless and they should be taught to carry out their own dental care with the supervision and guidance of parents. Objective: To assess the knowledge of mothers of primary school children regarding dental hygiene. Methodology: Knowledge level of 100 mothers of school children aged between 6-12 years was assessed using structured interview schedule. Results: The 13% of mothers had adequate knowledge, 50% of the mothers had moderate knowledge, 35% of mother had average knowledge and 2% of mothers had inadequate knowledge regarding dental hygiene with mean knowledge scores 16.28 and mean percentage 54.49%.Conclusion: Mothers knowledge on dental hygiene must be improved for preventing dental problems of children.

INTRODUCTION:

Children are major consumers of health; they are the wealth of tomorrow. Children are major consumers of health; they are the wealth of tomorrow. A child is unique individual and not a miniature of adult. The childhood period is vital because the socialization process by the transmission of attitude, customs, and behavior through the influence of family and community (Parul 2009). The prevalence of caries is increasing rapidly in developing nations, which is of concern because dental caries is mostly a childhood disease and 80% of the world's children live in the developing countries. The most likely reasons for this increase of dental caries in developing countries is a combination of poor nutrition and poor oral hygienic practices (Caufield P W 2000).

School aged children tend to become careless about their dental hygiene and should be taught to carry out their own dental care with the supervision and guidance of parents. Most practitioners believe that the majority of children need to be brushed their teeth properly by the parents until approximately second grade. Children under 10 years of age may need parental assistance to brush back teeth. The most effective means of preventing dental caries is a regimen of oral hygiene tailored to the individual child by the dentist. Children should be taught to carry out their own dental care with the supervision and guidance of parents. Parents should learn proper brushing technique along with their children and should inspect their children until the children can assume full responsibility for their own care (Wong and Hockenberry 2007).

A descriptive study was conducted in India. This study was undertaken with a twin objective of assessing the prevalence of dental caries in parts of Uttaranchal state and designing the interventional strategies with a view to attend the oral health care needs of children. A total of 722 school children in the age range of 7-12 years of Nainital district were examined using world health organization (WHO) (1997) criteria. The result showed that an overall caries prevalence of 77.7% was recorded, which is 67.26% in the age group of 7-9 years and 80.86% in 10-12 years, respectively. It was observed that there were greater treatment needs in older age group. Another significant finding of the study was that the 59.96% required restorative treatment out of the various dental treatment needs evaluated (Grewal et. al. 2009)

Dental care or broadly speaking oral hygiene is an important aspect of the personal health of an individual. Good oral hygiene implies sound teeth and healthy gums with healthy surroundings tissues. The physical act of chewing food promotes saliva and gastric secretions and helps indigestion. The act chewing and tasting is called mastication. Teeth are essential not only for mastication of food, but also good appearance and clear speech. There is the evidence that improvement of oral hygiene does improve the general health. The nursing staffs have a special contribution to make in the care of oral hygiene of their patients in hospital, nursing homes and other residential institutions (Park 2004).

The investigators in their daily clinical practice, both in the hospital and community have come across many children with dental caries. If the parents as well as children are knowledgeable and conscious about their dental hygiene, the problem of dental caries can be prevented. Thus the investigators felt the need to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding dental hygiene, and to develop an information booklet on meaning, purpose and how to maintain dental hygiene, so that they will be able to ensure, good dental hygiene of their children.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the knowledge of mothers of primary school children regarding dental hygiene.
2. To find association between knowledge scores and the selected demographic variables. 3. To develop an information booklet on dental hygiene.

METHODOLOGY:

The non experimental descriptive research approach was used for the study. The study was conducted in Natekal community area, Mangalore. The samples were 100 mothers who had primary school children aged between 6-12 years who were selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using a structured interview schedule. The knowledge questionnaire had two parts where first part had 8 questions on demographic data and part to consist of 30 questions on dental hygiene. The right answer carried score 1 where for the wrong answer score 0. The total score was 30. The scoring of the knowledge level was described as score of below 8 as inadequate, 8-14 as average, 15-22 as moderately adequate and

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23-30 as adequate. Before administering the tool was validated with 10 experts and corrections were made. The reliability of the tool was found to 0.92. Pilot study was done to find the feasibility of the study. Finally to conduct the research study in a selected community area, formal written permission was obtained from the concerned authority. The purpose of the study was explained to the samples and their willingness was ascertained by taking informed written consent. The structured interview schedule was administered to the samples and the data was collected. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS:

Section I: Distribution of samples according to demographic characteristics:

The 50% samples were between 20-30 years and 50% of samples were between 30-40 years. 18% of samples belong to Hindu religion, 64%belongs to Muslim religion, and 18% belong to Christian religion.25%of samples were vegetarians, 75% of samples were consuming mixed diet. 25% were illiterate, 38% were having primary education, 27% were having secondary education and 10% were having PUC education. 54% were house wives, 22% were government employees, 20% were private employees and 4% were self employed. All 100% of samples had previous information about dental hygiene and they acquired it from various sources. It was found that 46% got information from news papers, 23% from television, 9% from friends and family, 7% from health professionals, and 15% from other means like life experience.

Section II: Grading of knowledge

Fig 1: Description of samples according to Knowledge grading

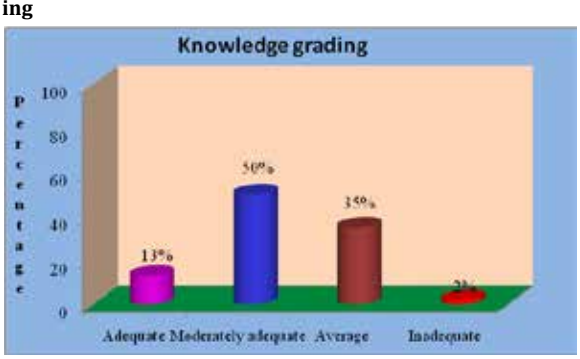


Table 4: area wise knowledge scores of mothers

Sl. No	Area	Maximum possible score	Mean	Mean percentage	Standard deviation
1	General aspect of dental hygiene	10	6.26	62.6%	1.87
2	Knowledge on brushing	8	4.19	52.37%	1.96
3	Knowledge on problems of poor dental hygiene, prevention and management	12	5.83	48.5%	1.99
4	Total	30	16.28	54.49%	5.82

Area- wise mean score percentage on knowledge of mothers regarding dental hygiene with the highest mean percentage (62.6 %) was found in the area of "general aspect of dental hygiene" with mean ± SD of 6.26±1.87. The mean percentage of knowledge score in the area of "brushing" was (52.37%) with mean ± SD of 4.19± 1.96. Knowledge in the area of problems of poor dental hygiene, prevention and management (48.5%) with an area-wise mean ± SD of 5.83+1.99.

Section III -Association between knowledge of mothers regarding dental hygiene with selected demographic variables

Chi square ($\chi 2$) test was used to find association between the knowledge of mothers and selected demographic variables. There was no significant association between knowledge of mother and selected demographic variables like age, religion, dietary pattern, and education of mother and source of previous information but association was found between the knowledge of mothers and occupation of the mothers.

Suggestions:

1. Nurse should organize teaching programmes to educate the public regarding dental hygiene.
2. Health education sessions can be conducted on regular basis on healthy dental practice for mothers of primary school children.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made. Since the study was carried on a small convenient sample, the results can be used only as a guide for further studies.

1 A similar study on a large sample may help to draw more definite conclusions and make generalizations.
2. The study can be conducted using various method of teaching to determine the effective method of teaching.
3. A follow up study can be conducted to determine the effect of teaching in terms of gain in knowledge and to improve the practices to prevent dental problems.

Conclusion

School age is the period when the child has high risk of developing dental caries and also the negligence of dental hygiene is high. If the mothers have adequate knowledge of dental hygiene they can teach the children good dental hygiene as well as can keep their children away from problems arising due to poor dental hygiene. As health professionals nurses should try to inculcate knowledge in the mothers of school children regarding problems of poor dental hygiene and how they can avoid these problems by helping their children to practice good dental hygiene practices. An information booklet was developed and distributed to the mothers regarding dental hygiene, which would be useful for them.

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